

Structuring a Guided Reading Lesson

A Summary of the Work of Gay Su Pinnell and Irene C. Fountas

“Guided reading is a highly effective form of small-group instruction. Based on assessment, the teacher brings together a group of readers who are similar enough in their reading development that they can be taught together. They read independently at about the same level and can take on a new text selected by the teacher that is just a little more challenging. The teacher supports the reading in a way that enables students to read more challenging text with effective processing, thus expanding their reading powers.”

--From *An Introduction to Guided Reading*,
The Continuum of Literacy Learning: Behaviors to Notice, Teach, and Support
Heinemann, 2007

Important Points to Consider

I. The thinking skills and behaviors that readers use are the same across levels. Readers merely apply them to increasingly difficult texts.

- Solving words, using a flexible range of strategies
- Self-monitoring their reading for accuracy and understanding, and adjusting as necessary
- Searching for and using information
- Remembering information in summary form
- Sustaining fluent, phrased reading
- Adjusting reading in order to process a variety of texts
- Making predictions
- Synthesizing new information
- Making connections
- Inferring
- Thinking analytically about a text to notice how it is constructed or how the writer crafts language
- Thinking critically about a text

The Continuum of Literacy Learning: Behaviors and Understandings to Teach, to Notice, and Support,
by Gary Su Pinnell and Irene C. Fountas, published by Heinemann, 2007

II. Readers are always meeting greater demands at every level because the texts are increasingly challenging.

III. Reader's knowledge of genres expands over time, but also grows in depth.

IV. At each level, the content load of texts becomes heavier, requiring an increasing amount of background knowledge.

V. At each level, the themes and ideas are more mature, requiring readers to consider perspectives and cultures beyond their own.

VI. The specific descriptions of thinking within, beyond, and about text do not change dramatically from level to level.

Structure of a Guided Reading Lesson:

Phase	Instructional Strategies
Introduce Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activate background knowledge• Invite students to share thinking• Enable students to hear and say new language structures• Have students say and locate specific words in the text• Challenge students to make connections• Reveal the text structure• Use new vocabulary words in contexts that reveal meaning• Prompt predictions• Draw attention to writer's craft to inspire analysis• Draw attention to accuracy or authenticity of text• Draw attention to illustrations, tables, charts, and graphs
Reading the Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate, prompt, or reinforce effective use of the strategic actions/thinking skills/behaviors• Prompt for fluency and phrasing
Discuss Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gather evidence (assess) comprehension by observing what students say• Invite students to pose questions• Help students learn how to engage in rich discussion• Extend understanding through questioning, summarizing, restating, and adding to comments
Teaching for Processing Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revisit the text to demonstrate or reinforce any aspect of reading, including any strategic actions/thinking skills/behaviors• Provide explicit demonstrations of strategic actions using any part of the text that has just been read.
Word Work (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach any aspect of word analysis• Have students manipulate words using magnetic letters, white boards, pencil/paper to make or to take apart words
Extending Meaning (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use writing, drawing, or extended talk to explore any part of the text with greater depth.